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## NOTES FROM THE MEDICAL PRESS

IN CHARGE OF

ELISABETH ROBINSON SCOVIL

**TYPHUS FEVER.**—Two writers in the *British Medical Journal* record their observations on 2000 cases of typhus in one of the German prison camps. Body lice seem to be the carriers of the disease. The patients did well on starvation diet; easily assimilated solid food should be given as soon as the tongue begins to clear. Plenty of liquid should be given throughout the disease. Expectant and symptomatic treatment with the free use of morphia, unless contraindicated, is recommended.

**TRENCH FEVER.**—*The Lancet* says this fever is not contagious in any high degree. The early symptoms are headache, pain in the back and legs, with no catarrh or gastro-intestinal disturbance. The tongue is fairly clean; there is no rash, enlargement of the spleen or bronchitis.

**NITROUS OXIDE.**—*The Journal of the American Medical Association* describes the use of nitrous oxide gas as an anesthetic at Lakeside Hospital, Cleveland, where it is manufactured by a special method in such a pure state as to be without poisonous effects. It is not disagreeable or irritating, consciousness is promptly lost, vomiting is extremely rare, pneumonia and post-operative shock are much less frequent and the patients are able to leave the ward sooner than with other anesthetics.

**THE PUERPERIUM.**—A writer in the *New York Medical Journal* gives some hints for the management of puerperal women. He thinks it unwise to bind the abdomen tightly, as involution is not thereby promoted. The patient need not be kept flat on her back for any length of time. Starvation for the first few days is not necessary, judicious liberality in diet gives better lactation and earlier convalescence. A post-partum high temperature, even if accompanied by a foul discharge and some subinvolution, is better treated by elevating the head of the bed to facilitate drainage and giving one or more doses of ergot or pituitary extract. Intra-uterine douches or curetting is a questionable method of treatment. If the milk has to be dried up, the breasts should be left absolutely and severely alone. The usual treatments are useless.

**IODINE IN ERYSIPELAS.**—An Italian medical journal strongly recommends the painting of the affected area with tincture of iodine, brilliant

results having been obtained by its use. In the most severe cases an anti-streptococcus serum was used as a supplementary measure.

FOREIGN TECHNIC.—*The Journal of the American Medical Association* says, in a quotation, the foreign operator does much more of his own work than is the rule with us. He often ties, cuts and sponges himself. The operator may even thread his own needles and lay out his own simplified outfit. Lessened infection is said to result from a minimum number of persons coming in contact with instruments, sponges and wound.

INSECTICIDES.—*The Journal of Tropical Medicine* recommends kerosene oil as, on the whole, the most efficient insecticide for body lice and bed bugs. Guaiacol is also a useful preparation. Iodoform will kill lice in fifteen minutes but has no effect on bed bugs. Naphthalene and menthol powder are more agreeable to use than kerosene on account of the odor.

MAGNESIUM SULPHATE SOLUTION.—*The British Journal of Surgery* discusses the treatment of wounds with a solution of magnesium sulphate. Forty ounces is dissolved in ten ounces of glycerine and thirty ounces of boiling water, the whole sterilized in an autoclave. The application is painless, the dressings, even in the most septic cases, require changing only twice a day. In two or three days pus almost disappears, sloughs begin to separate and the whole surface of the wound is a bright red color. The granulations never become flabby or edematous and secondary abscesses are almost unknown. Constitutional symptoms seldom occur.

THE OCCURRENCE OF CONCEPTION.—A German medical journal publishes the result of some inquiries into the time during the menstrual cycle most favorable to conception. By far the greater number of conceptions occur during the first eight days after the menstrual flow. From the eighth to the eighteenth day after menstruation is over, the curve drops steadily to nothing. From the eighteenth to the twenty-fourth day conception did not take place.

BALDNESS.—*The Practitioner* states that if a person is going to be bald in middle life, or even in old age, the symptoms will appear between the ages of fifteen and twenty-five. Although the hair may gradually become thinner as years advance, it is very unusual for a severe form of baldness to begin after this period of life.

BLOWING THE NOSE PROPERLY.—A writer in the *Medical Record* asserts that when the nose is not properly cleaned the entire bronchial tract is affected, the nose being the grand central terminal of the air tract. He believes that the improper use of the handkerchief may be a salient factor in the development of consumption. Germs are not

properly expelled but allowed lodgment. The correct method is a deep inspiration to fill the chest with air, then one finger placed so as to close one nostril. With a violent expiration the air is forced through the open chamber of the nose and the discharge received in a handkerchief. The procedure is then repeated with the other side.

ABSENCE OF ALCOHOLIC INSANITY.—A Russian medical journal states that in the present campaign not a single case of alcoholic insanity has occurred.

RECTAL FEEDING.—In an editorial on this subject, the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, referring to some experiments, says the largest amount of nitrogen the experimenter was able to supply daily by rectal feeding was 3.9 grams, of which 2 grams were returned in the stools. In no case did more than half of the protein supplied disappear, sometimes much less. He concludes that the results are practically negligible. If, however, rectal feeding is to be attempted, effort should be concentrated on that type of food stuff most likely to be absorbed and promptly utilized. Glucose is suggested.

NEURASTHENIA AND WAR.—In an address before the Toronto Academy of Medicine it was stated that neurasthenia and other neurotic conditions are apparently becoming much less common in spite of the anxiety and strain resulting from the war. This indicates that it is not so much the great tragedies of life which are apt to upset the equilibrium of the nervous system, but small daily worries, persisting for long periods of time, and above all, lack of occupation and interest in life.

OPERATIVE INFECTION.—A German surgeon emphasizes the warning that infection is much less likely to spread if the limb is kept perfectly still. After cuts and scratches the arm should be worn in a sling for from 24 to 48 hours. A small moist compress is applied to the wound to prevent adhesion. Absolute rest is necessary, even help in feeding. Neglect of this precaution transformed a simple injury of the middle finger into a subcutaneous phlegmon which required six weeks before function was restored to the finger.

MANAGEMENT OF ENURESIS.—*The Archives of Pediatrics* recommends that the involuntary micturition should be prevented by placing the child in a position to voluntarily empty the bladder at regular intervals. When systematically carried out it is almost invariably successful without the use of drugs. A chart should be provided. If micturition occurs every two hours, the child is placed on the chamber every hour for the first twelve hours, also during the early hours of the night. After midnight, once in two hours is sufficient. If the chart shows that the urine has been voided accidentally at any interval this hour should be anticipated the next day by half an hour.